

VERTIGO

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SUGGESTED FOR
MATURE READERS
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FABLES



NO, NO, NO!
GET IT **STRAIGHT**,
BUDDY.

THERE WERE
ORIGINALLY **FIVE** MAGIC
BEANS THAT MY MOTHER
(GOD REST HER SOUL)
THREW OUT THE
WINDOW.

THEN **LATER**,
AFTER MAKING SURE
SHE'D FALLEN ASLEEP--SO
AS TO AVOID ANOTHER BEATING--
I SNUCK OUT AND SCRAMBLED
AROUND IN THE DARK TO
GET THEM **BACK**.

I WAS ABLE
TO FIND FOUR OF THEM,
BY FEEL, BEFORE GIVING
UP.

AND THE
NEXT DAY I DISCOVERED
THAT THE MAGIC BEANSTALK
HAD GROWN FROM THE ONE
BEAN I **COULDN'T**
FIND.

ALL THAT
STALK FROM JUST
ONE BEAN?

YES,
THRUSHBEARD.
PRECISELY. THAT'S
WHAT I'VE BEEN
TRYING TO GET
THROUGH YOUR
THICK **SKULL** ALL
NIGHT.

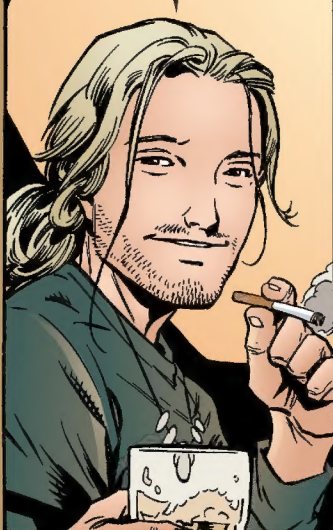
**STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE,
BUT A MAN WALKS INTO A BAR...**

CHAPTER THREE ◦ MARCH OF THE WOODEN SOLDIERS

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I HAVE FOUR BEANS LEFT, AND ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS PLANT **ONE** OF THEM IN SOME REMOTE LOCATION AND THEN WAIT FOR IT TO GROW ITS OWN GIANT **BEANSTALK**—CLEAR UP TO THE CLOUD KINGDOMS.



WHY WOULD WE WANT TO DO **THAT**?

BECAUSE THE CLOUD KINGDOMS ARE THE ONE PLACE WE CAN BE SURE THE ADVERSARY HASN'T **INVADED** YET. AFTER ALL, HE DOESN'T HAVE THE BEANS TO **GET** THERE.



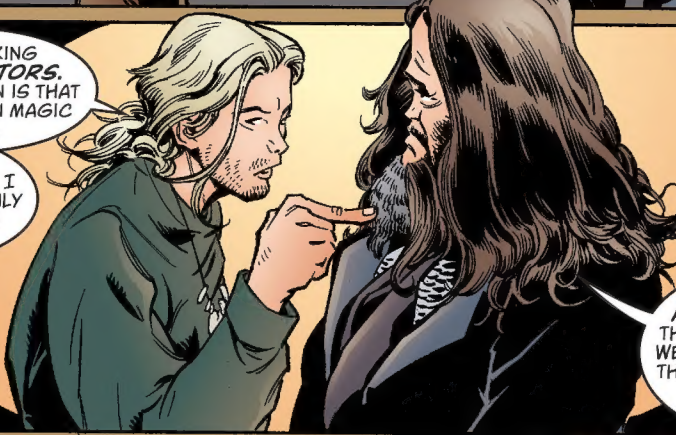
HOW DO YOU KNOW?

MAYBE HE FOUND VAST **STOREHOUSES** OF MAGIC BEANS SOMEWHERE, AND NOW THERE'S BEANSTALKS ALL **OVER** HIS EMPIRE, WITH ELEVATORS AND SHIT, GOING UP AND DOWN TO THE CLOUD KINGDOMS EVERY **DING-DONG DAY**.



THAT'S A SILLY IDEA.

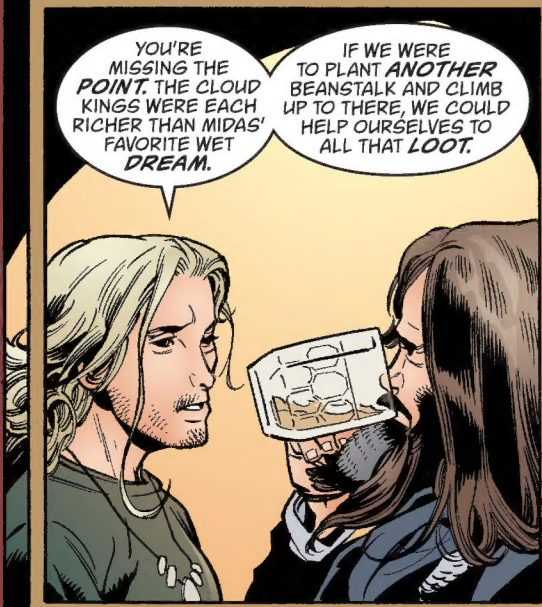
WHY? HE'S HAD ENOUGH TIME BY **NOW** TO INSTALL ELEVATORS IN THOSE THINGS—POWERED BY GIANTS OR TROLLS OR DRAGONS, OR WHO **KNOWS** WHAT?



I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT **ELEVATORS**. THE SILLY NOTION IS THAT HE HAS HIS OWN MAGIC **BEANS**.

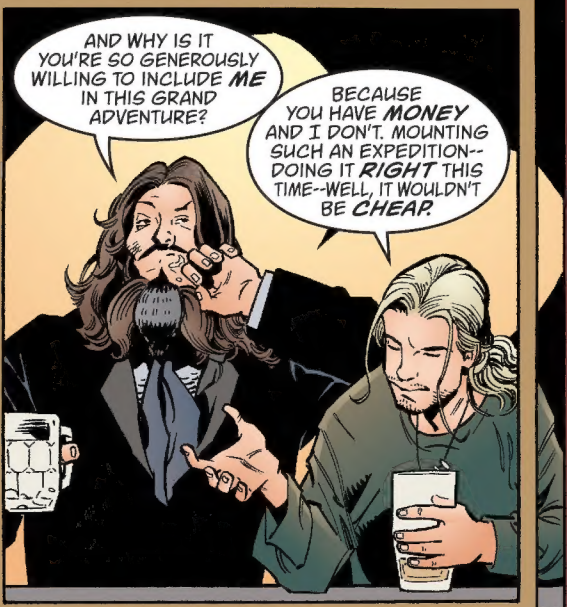
THEY'RE VERY RARE, AND I BOUGHT THE ONLY FIVE OF THEM LEFT.

HOW **RARE** COULD THEY **BE** IF THEY WERE SELLING AT THE RATE OF FIVE BEANS PER **COW**?



YOU'RE MISSING THE POINT. THE CLOUD KINGS WERE EACH RICHER THAN MIDAS' FAVORITE WET DREAM.

IF WE WERE TO PLANT **ANOTHER** BEANSTALK AND CLIMB UP TO THERE, WE COULD HELP OURSELVES TO ALL THAT LOOT.



AND WHY IS IT YOU'RE SO GENEROUSLY WILLING TO INCLUDE **ME** IN THIS GRAND ADVENTURE?

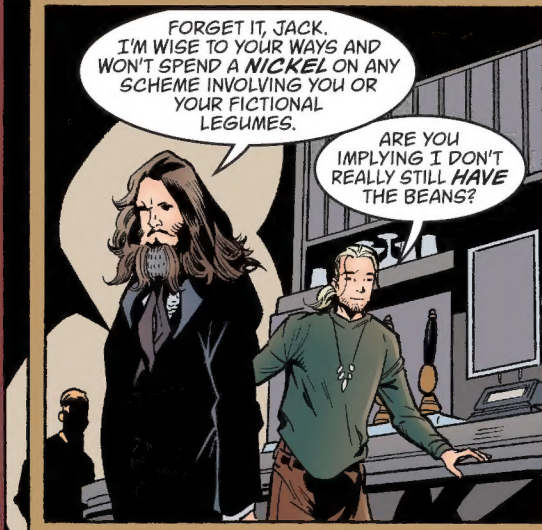
BECAUSE YOU HAVE **MONEY** AND I DON'T. MOUNTING SUCH AN EXPEDITION--DOING IT **RIGHT** THIS TIME--WELL, IT WOULDN'T BE **CHEAP**.



HERE'S THE DEAL. WE'LL BE EQUAL **PARTNERS**. I PROVIDE ONE OF THE MAGIC BEANS...

...AND YOU PUT UP THE BARE BONES MONETARY EXPENSES--LET'S SAY ABOUT THIRTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS TO START WITH.

WHICH I WILL NEVER SEE AGAIN, ONCE I HAND THE MONEY OVER TO YOU.



FORGET IT, JACK. I'M WISE TO YOUR WAYS AND WON'T SPEND A **NICKEL** ON ANY SCHEME INVOLVING YOU OR YOUR FICTIONAL LEGUMES.

ARE YOU IMPLYING I DON'T REALLY STILL **HAVE** THE BEANS?



GOOD NIGHT, JACK.

I'VE **NEVER** LIKED YOU, THRUISHBEARD!

ELSEWHERE IN THE CITY--FAR
REMOVED FROM FABLETOWN.

THIS
IS THE
PLACE.

CAFE

FLAT MIKES
BAR

KEEP THE
CHANGE.

24 HOUR TAXI

THANKS,
MACK.

WHISKEY,
PLEASE.
NEAT.

MAKE
IT A TALL
ONE.

THAT
HAS TO BE BIGBY.
HOW'D YOU FIND ME,
SHERIFF?

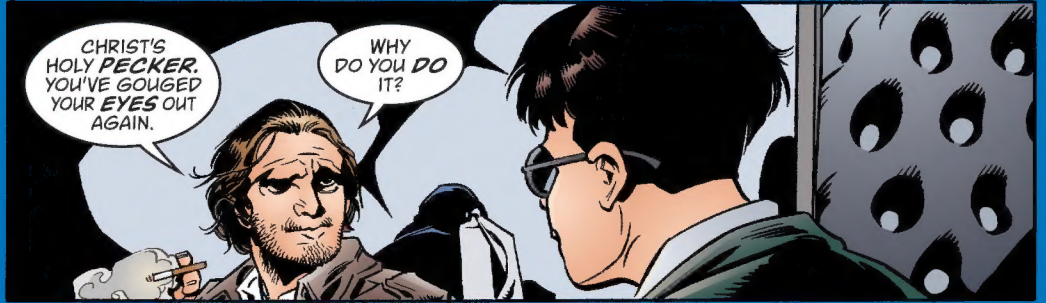
I KEEP
TRACK OF THOSE
FABLES WHO DECIDE
TO LIVE OUT IN THE
MUNDY.



SIT. JOIN ME.

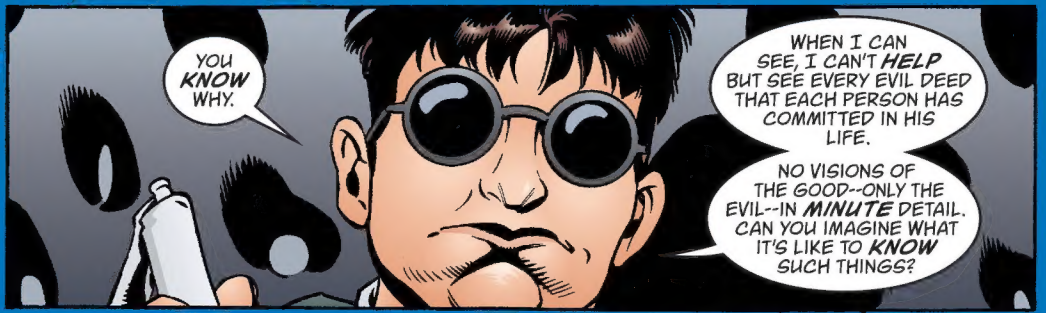
HOW'VE YOU BEEN, KAY?

I'VE BEEN BETTER AND I'VE BEEN WORSE.



CHRIST'S HOLY PECKER. YOU'VE GOUGED YOUR EYES OUT AGAIN.

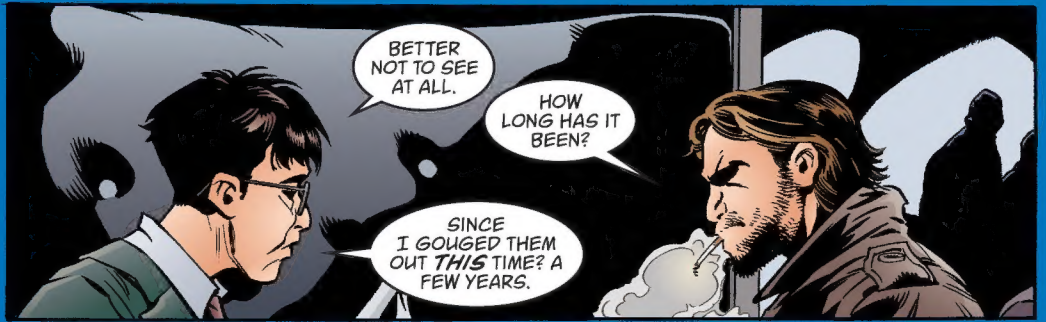
WHY DO YOU DO IT?



YOU KNOW WHY.

WHEN I CAN SEE, I CAN'T HELP BUT SEE EVERY EVIL DEED THAT EACH PERSON HAS COMMITTED IN HIS LIFE.

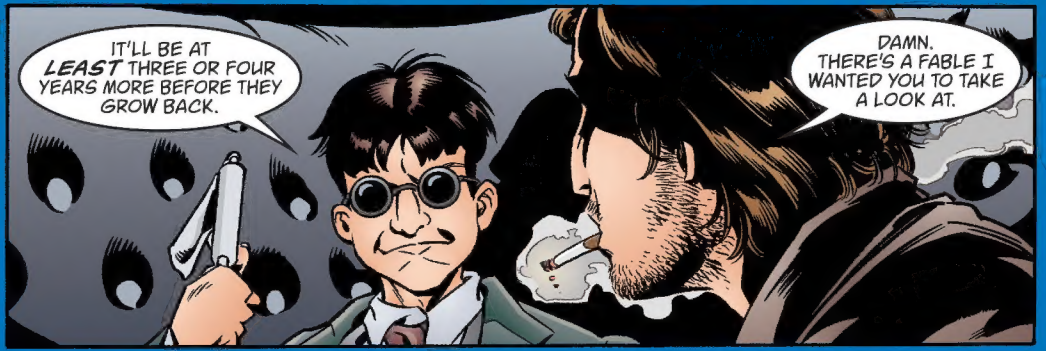
NO VISIONS OF THE GOOD--ONLY THE EVIL--IN *MINUTE* DETAIL. CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT IT'S LIKE TO *KNOW* SUCH THINGS?



BETTER NOT TO SEE AT ALL.

HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN?

SINCE I GOUGED THEM OUT *THIS* TIME? A FEW YEARS.



IT'LL BE AT *LEAST* THREE OR FOUR YEARS MORE BEFORE THEY GROW BACK.

DAMN. THERE'S A FABLE I WANTED YOU TO TAKE A LOOK AT.



HAVEN'T I
ALREADY TESTED
THEM ALL?

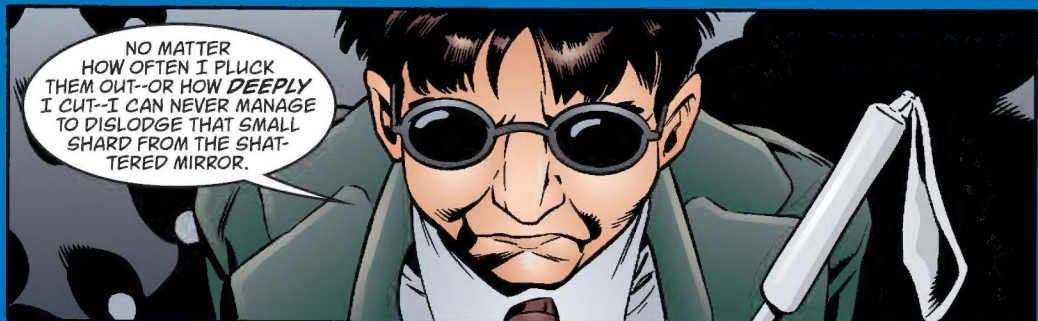
THIS ONE
JUST ARRIVED--A GIRL
I SUSPECT IS A SPY FOR
THE ADVERSARY.

YOU COULD'VE
TAKEN ONE GLANCE AT
HER AND KNOWN IF IT WAS
TRUE OR NOT.



TOO
BAD FOR
OUR SIDE,
HUH?

BUT
YOU KNOW WHAT
THE GOOD BOOK SAYS.
"IF THINE EYE OFFENDS
THEE..."



NO MATTER
HOW OFTEN I PLUCK
THEM OUT--OR HOW DEEPLY
I CUT--I CAN NEVER MANAGE
TO DISLODGE THAT SMALL
SHARD FROM THE SHATTERED MIRROR.



WHY ARE
THE CURSED
THINGS ALWAYS
BUILT SO MUCH
BETTER THAN
GOOD
MAGIC?

I DON'T
KNOW. ASK
THE SNOW
QUEEN.



LOOK, KAY--

I KNOW. YOU CAN'T STAY.

I WOULD, BUT THIS INVESTIGATION NEEDS MY ATTENTION.

I HAVE TO CATCH AN EARLY FLIGHT IN THE MORNING.



TAKE CARE, KAY.

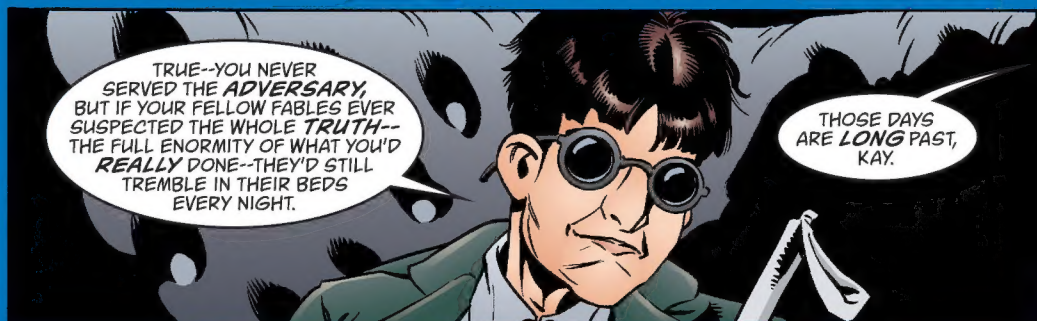
HEY, BIGBY?

YEAH?



I GOT QUITE A GOOD LOOK AT YOU IN THE OLD DAYS, DIDN'T I?

IMAGINE SO.



TRUE--YOU NEVER SERVED THE **ADVERSARY**, BUT IF YOUR FELLOW FABLES EVER SUSPECTED THE WHOLE **TRUTH**--THE FULL ENORMITY OF WHAT YOU'D **REALLY DONE**--THEY'D STILL TREMBLE IN THEIR BEDS EVERY NIGHT.

THOSE DAYS ARE **LONG PAST**, KAY.



LET'S HOPE SO.



WHAT TH' HELL ARE YOU BOZOS TALKING ABOUT?

GO BACK TO THE MUNDY-BLOODY-MUNDY, BOYS.

WE'RE DISCUSSING THE BEANS.

THE FOUR REMAINING MAGIC BEANS.

WE'D LIKE TO BUY THEM FROM YOU.

THIRTEEN THOUSAND DOLLARS IS THE PRICE YOU QUOTED, CORRECT?

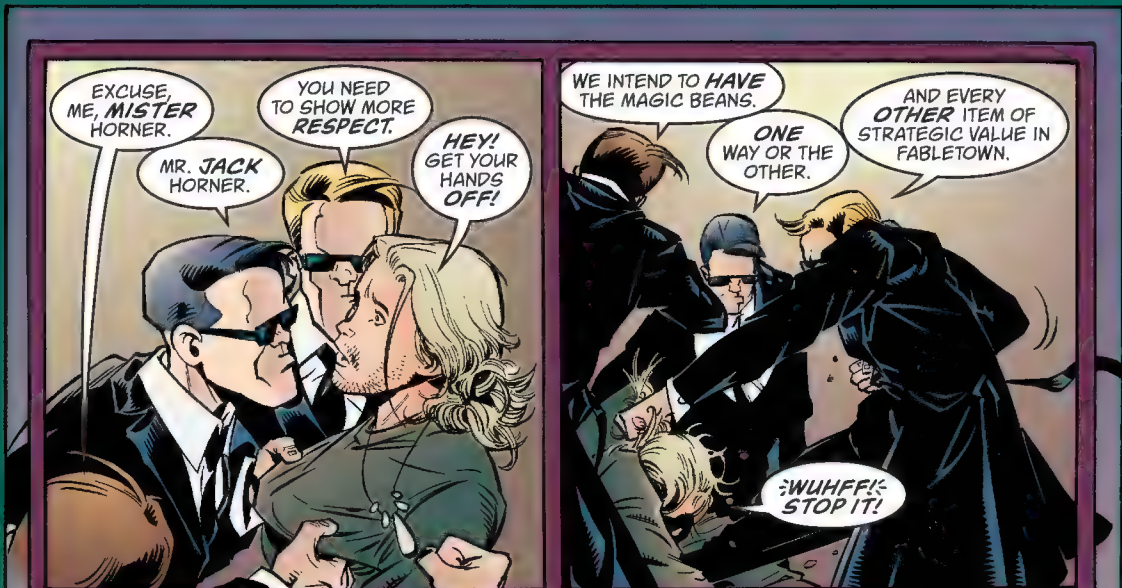
WE CAN AFFORD THAT.

IS THAT PER BEAN OR FOR ALL FOUR?

YOU MUNDY STUPIDS! THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS MAGIC BEANS.

NEWSFLASH, BOYS: SANTA AND THE EASTER BUNNY AREN'T REAL EITHER.

YOU GOT TO SWITCH YOUR BULLSHIT DETECTORS OFF THE "EXTREMELY GULLIBLE" SETTING.



EXCUSE ME, **MISTER HORNER**.

MR. **JACK HORNER**.

YOU NEED TO SHOW MORE **RESPECT**.

HEY! GET YOUR **HANDS OFF!**

WE INTEND TO **HAVE** THE **MAGIC BEANS**.

ONE WAY OR THE **OTHER**.

AND EVERY **OTHER** ITEM OF **STRATEGIC VALUE** IN **FABLETOWN**.

WUHH! STOP IT!



ALONG THE WAY WE'LL **TEACH** YOU **MEATHEADS**.

EVEN **FABLE** **MEATHEADS** NEED TO **LEARN RESPECT**.

ESPECIALLY **FABLE** **MEATHEADS**.

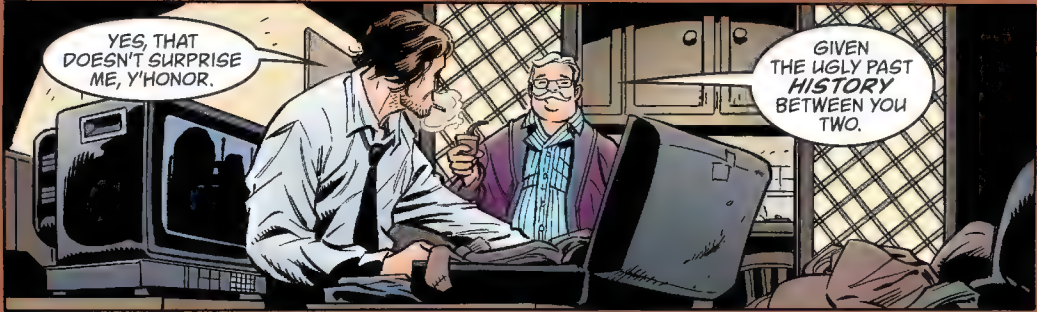
URRRGH!

H-HELP!



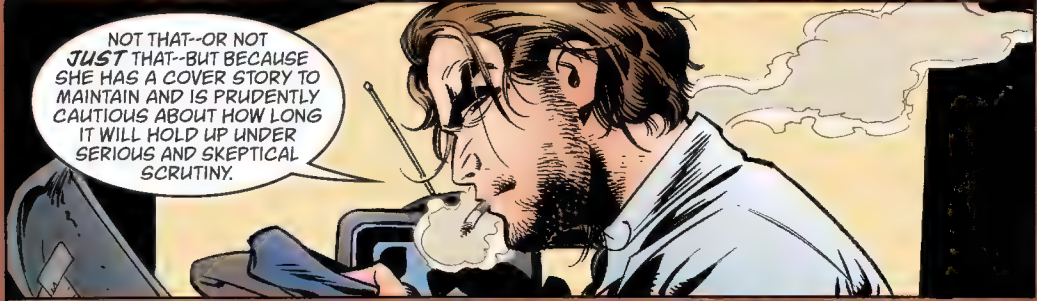
...HELP...!

I DON'T KNOW WHERE **RIDING HOOD** STAYED **LAST NIGHT**. BUT SHE WAS **TERRIBLY UPSET** ABOUT THE **PROSPECT** OF YOU **INTERROGATING** HER.



YES, THAT DOESN'T SURPRISE ME, Y'HONOR.

GIVEN THE UGLY PAST HISTORY BETWEEN YOU TWO.



NOT THAT--OR NOT JUST THAT--BUT BECAUSE SHE HAS A COVER STORY TO MAINTAIN AND IS PRUDENTLY CAUTIOUS ABOUT HOW LONG IT WILL HOLD UP UNDER SERIOUS AND SKEPTICAL SCRUTINY.



CONVENIENT THEN THAT SHE HAS A GOOD REASON TO AVOID CONTACT WITH ME.

"COVER STORY"? WHAT NONSENSE ARE YOU SPOUTING NOW?

HONESTLY, MR. WOLF, SOMETIMES IT'S AS THOUGH YOU TALK IN A LANGUAGE ALL YOUR OWN.



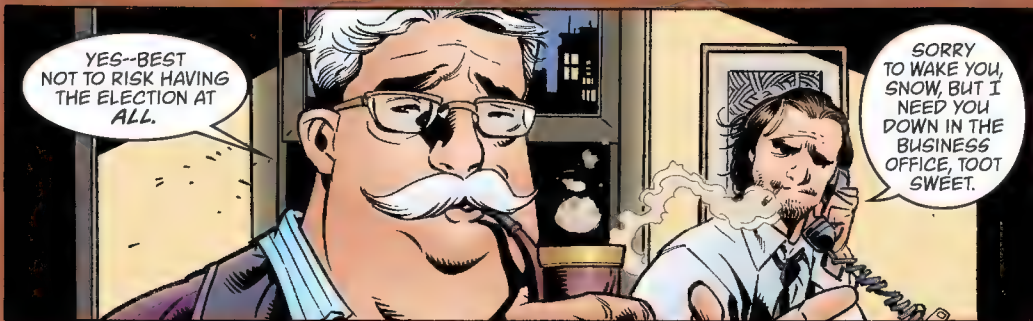
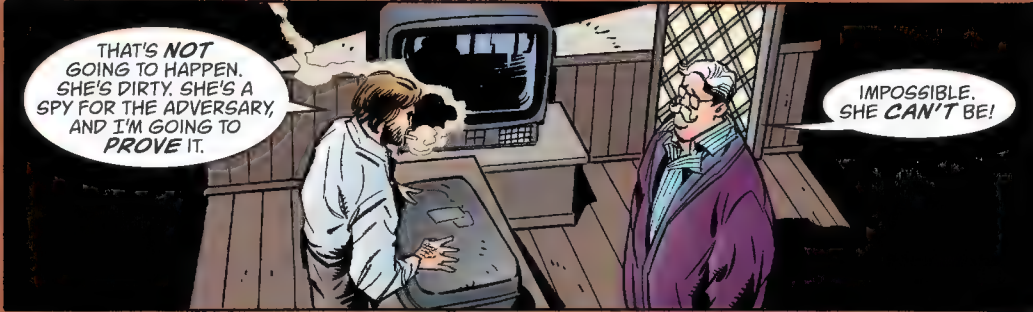
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO EXPLAIN ALL OF THIS RIGHT NOW, MR. MAYOR.

MY FLIGHT LEAVES AT SEVEN AND I STILL HAVE TO GET NOW TO COUGH UP THE TICKET PRICE AND PER DIEM FROM PETTY CASH.

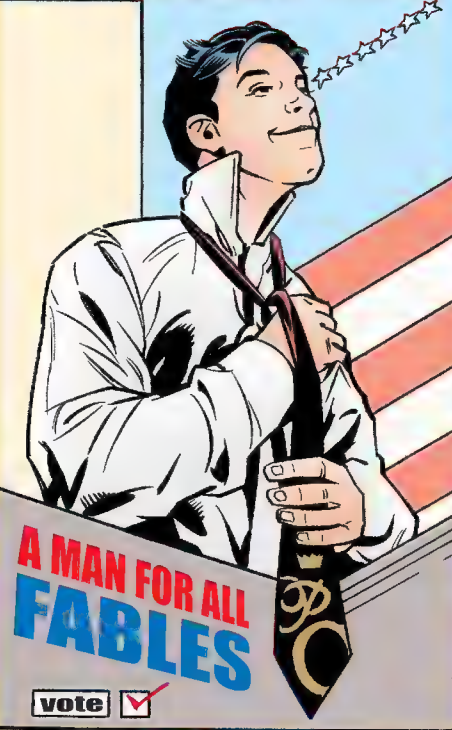


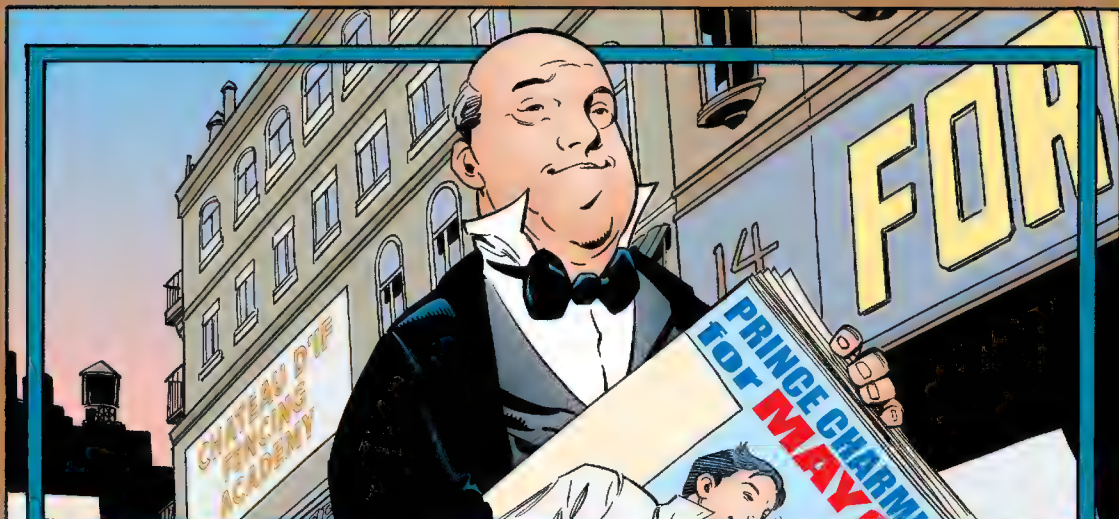
WHERE ARE YOU GOING? YOU'RE NEEDED HERE.

YOU NEED TO HURRY UP AND SIGN OFF ON RIDING HOOD'S BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION, SO THAT WE CAN FORMALLY WELCOME HER TO THE COMMUNITY.



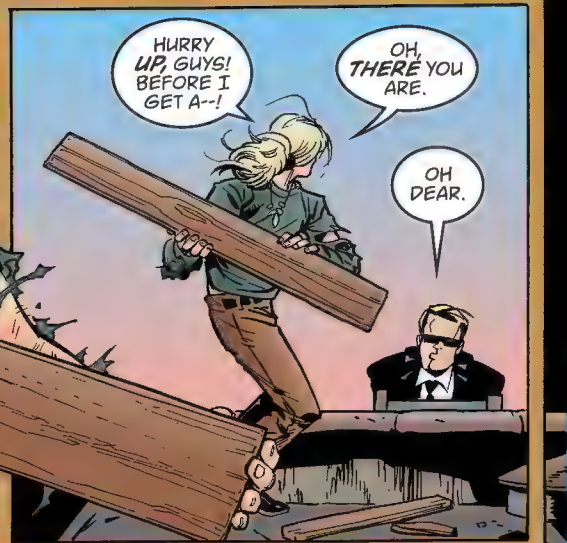
PRINCE CHARMING for **MAYOR**













OH, I DOUBT THIS WILL TURN OUT *WELL*, BROTHER.



SMACK!

BAM!



THERE, BROTHERS, I LOOK *JUST* LIKE ONE OF THE MEATHEADS AGAIN.

I'M ON MY--



--WAY.





OKAY,
BOYS, I'M
WAITING.

NEXT?



NOT
COMING UP
HERE,
FELLA?

NO, I
BELIEVE MY
BROTHERS AND
I HAVE DECIDED
TO SUSPEND OUR
CONVERSATION,
FOR NOW.



THEN I'LL GIVE YOU FIVE MINUTES
TO CLIMB BACK **DOWN** AND DRAG YOUR
BROTHERS OFF TO THE HOSPITAL--AND
DON'T COME BACK.

OH, WE'LL
SEE YOU AGAIN,
JACK HORNER. I
CAN PROMISE
THAT.



ARE
YOU **INTACT**,
BROTHER?

MOSTLY. I
SEEM TO HAVE
BROKEN MY LEG
IN THE FALL.

I'M
ADDLED, BUT
UNHARMED.



WE SHOULD HASTILY LEAVE THIS VICINITY, BROTHERS.

INDEED, LEST **MORE MEAT-FABLES** GATHER TO THE COMMOTION.

WHERE DID YOUR BROKEN LEG GET TO, BROTHER LOU?



LEAVE IT, BROTHER HUGH. IT'S EASILY **REPLACE-ABLE**.

TRUE, LET'S RETIRE TO THE HIDEOUT TO REPAIR YOU.

FORTH-WITH.



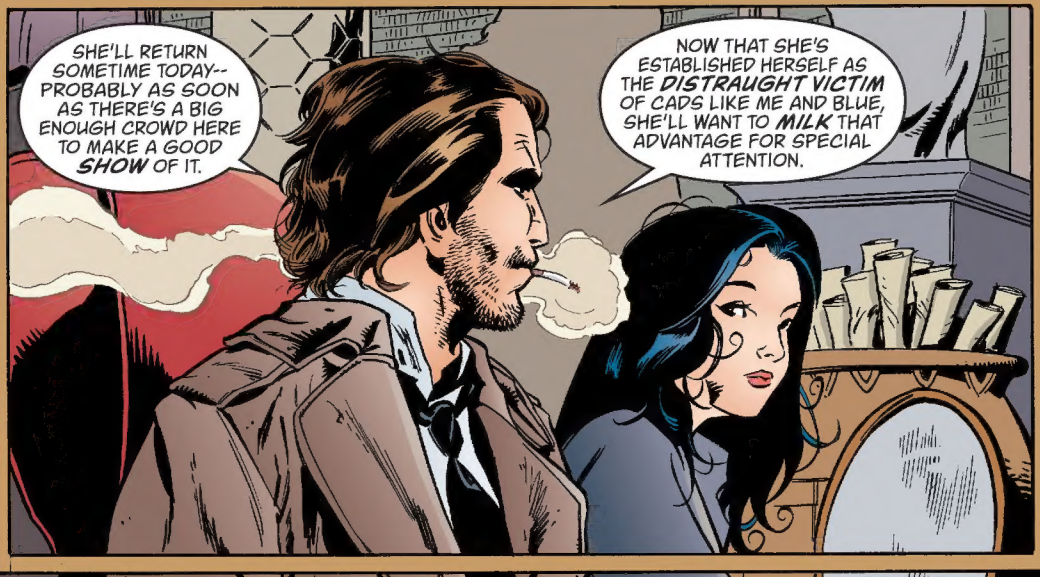
BEFORE RETURNING WE'LL OBTAIN **GUNS**.

AGREED, IN **HINDSIGHT** WE SHOULD HAVE ATTENDED TO THAT EARLIER.

AGREED, THE MEATHEADS OF THIS STRANGE LAND ONLY RESPECT THOSE WITH **GUNS**.



WHILE I'M **GONE**, KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR RIDING HOOD, SNOW.



SHE'LL RETURN SOMETIME TODAY-- PROBABLY AS SOON AS THERE'S A BIG ENOUGH CROWD HERE TO MAKE A GOOD **SHOW** OF IT.

NOW THAT SHE'S ESTABLISHED HERSELF AS THE **DISTRAUGHT VICTIM** OF CADS LIKE ME AND BLUE, SHE'LL WANT TO **MILK** THAT ADVANTAGE FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION.



YOU'RE SO SURE SHE'S A SPY?

HER ARRIVAL SEEMS JUST A TOUCH TOO... MIRACULOUS.

TRUE, BUT AN ARGUMENT CAN BE MADE THAT THE VERY EXISTENCE OF FABLETOWN IS ONE EXTENDED MIRACLE.

THE CANADA GATE HAS BEEN **BLOCKED** FOR NEARLY TWO HUNDRED YEARS, AND IT WAS CLOSED FROM THE **OTHER SIDE**--BY THE **ADVERSARY'S** FORCES, NOT OURS.



SO WHO OPENED IT AGAIN?

I'M ON MY WAY UP THERE TO FIND OUT.

SO YOU'LL HAVE TO RIDE HERD ON RIDING HOOD IN MY ABSENCE.

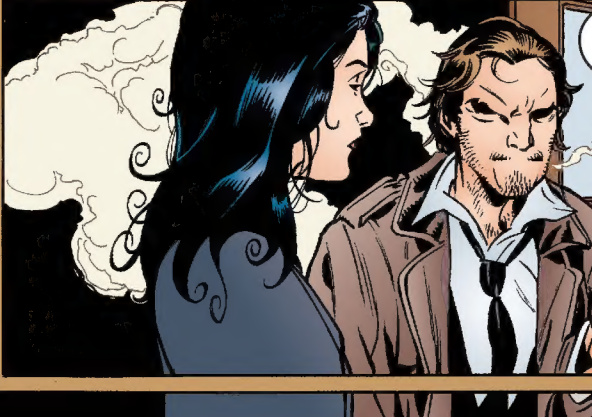


SHE'LL WANT TO KNOW ALL ABOUT OUR **SETUP**--WHO'S HERE, WHAT OUR **PLANS** ARE FOR THE HOMELANDS, AND WHAT **MILITARY RESOURCES** WE HAVE.

SO I'LL ANSWER HER QUESTIONS IN ENTHUSIASTIC **GENERALITIES**. I'VE RUN THIS PLACE LONG ENOUGH TO SPEAK FLUENT **DOUBLE-SPEAK**.



AND WHATEVER YOU DO, **DON'T** LET HER SIGN THE FABLETOWN CHARTER. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO GIVE HER THE PROTECTION OF THE GENERAL AMNESTY.



BIGBY, WE NEED TO TALK!

I WANT
TO REPORT
A MUGGING,
SHERIFF.

BUSINESS
OFFICE

NEXT:
HOW TO OBTAIN GUNS IN
THE MUNDY MEAT WORLD





NATHAN